

But God Gave The Increase (1 Corinthians 3:1-9)

God interrupts our fruitlessness

Proposition: Every one of God's people can see the supernatural increase of God in their lives and in their church by following the three instructions gleaned out of the text before us today.

- I. **Recognize a Definite Instruction for Our Labors** (Vs. 6a)
 - A. Definite Instruction about the Field of Labor (Vs. 9b-c)
 - B. Definite Instruction about the Fulfillment of Labor (Vs. 9a)
- II. **Realize a Diverse Involvement in Our Labors** (Vs. 6b)
 - A. A Diverse Role of Involvement (Vs. 6a-b; 8a; 10a-c)
 - B. A Diverse Reward for Involvement (Vs. 8b; 13)
- III. **Rely on a Divine Increase of Our Labors** (Vs. 6c)
 - A. A Singular Increase of Our Labors (Vs. 7a-b; 8a; 9a)
 - B. A Sovereign Increase of Our Labors (Vs. 6c; 7c)

But God Gave the Increase (1 Cor. 3:1-9)

In Paul's letter to the Corinthians, he corrected them in regards to their attitudes. One wrong attitude we find here in Ch 3 is a pride concerning the minister that introduced them to the Kingdom of God. (Vs 4) From there Paul

begins to speak to them concerning the labors of not just Apollos and himself but the labor of the church as a whole. Paul is teaching a lesson about that nasty 4 letter word called work. Work is a word that a lot of people don't like. There is a story my dad told me about my Great grandfather. It was said that he and my great grandmother would go out to paint the fence around the farm, he would carry a chair to sit in and watch my great grandmother paint the fence. When someone would drive by, he would get up grab a brush and paint as long as the passers by were in sight. Not a very flattering story, but one that pretty well pin points a lot of people's attitude towards work, especially the Lord's work, the work of the church. It reminds me of a letter sent out by a pastor to his rather large congregation concerning the number of workers the church had.

I. Recognize a Definite Instruction for Our Labors. Although the end result of verse 4 & 6 is that God supernaturally gives the increase, He has chosen to use human instruments

1182 Paul and Apollos to stage this increase.

A. Definite instruction about the Field of Labor

(Vs 9) The middle part of verse nine says we are his husbandry = this farm, his field. As the gardener looks over his garden so God looks over his church. Each and every one of our lives represent a portion of soil over which God by his Spirit has labored. He has cultivated our hearts, planted his truth, watered with his word, germinated salvation and reaped a harvest of good works! We are the Lord's vineyard in which he plants, prunes + produces.

The focus of God's labors is on his field the Church.

B. Definite instruction about the Fulfillment of Labor.

But Paul said "I planted." This church may be God's garden his husbandry but we are his laborers the word means co-laborer, fellow laborer. We are God's field hands. The fulfillment of the labor on God's plantation is by our hands. Paul had been personally working in God's field at Corinth. In vs 9, Paul said "we are laborers." Paul the preacher was not the select one to work for God, but all those that at one time were the planting are now to be participating. Are you

II. Realize a Diverse involvement in Our Labors.

It's little league baseball time. Even had 1st practice yesterday. The truth is that not every kid can be the pitcher or first base or hind catcher.

- 1) Dear Member: Our Church membership 1400; Nonresident members 75; Balance left to do the work 1325; Elderly who have done their share 25 Balance left to do the work 1300; Sick and shut-ins 25; Balance left to do the work 1275; Members who do not give 350; Christmas and Easter members 300; Balance left to do the work 625; Members who are overworked 300; Balance left to do the work 325; Members with alibis 200; Balance left to do the work 125; Members too busy with others things 123; Balance left to do the work 2. Unfortunately that is the way of it in many churches and these miss out on the supernatural increase described in Verse 6. I don't want us to miss our on this increase. Every one of God's people can see the supernatural increase of God in their lives and in their church by following the three instructions gleaned out of the text before us today.
- 2) ...His field the Church. Every local church should produce the fruit of the Spirit; holiness of living; giving of tithes and offerings; good works; praise to the Lord; and souls won to Christ!
- 3) ...are you spectating or participating? Are you sitting on the side lines doing nothing or are you in the game active and laboring. Many of use need to be like the little lady in one of Sam Jones meetings. He had what he called "Quittin' Meetings." People would testify to things they were going to quit. One little lady got up and said, "I haven't been doing anything and I am going to quit that." God gives definite instructions for our labors!

1) What is the main point of the parable of the talents?

to show that we are to use what we have been given to God.

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1) Matthew 25:19 After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

2) ...a driving incentive to launch us out into endeavors of service but to analyze our motives for service.

So it is in God's field of service. Notice
A. A Diverse Role of Involvement - Not
only did Paul plant but vs 6 goes on to
say that Apollas watered. Two very different
activities, yet both vitally important

to a harvest. Every one of us are to be
field hands ~~on~~ God farm yes, but not
all of us have the same task. Some God has
given gifts and abilities to fulfill distinct
by different roles in the church. Some teach
SS, some drive vans, some usher, some cook
some, ~~some~~ maintain. My job as your pastor
is to assist you in finding out where ^{for God} you can work.

B. A Diverse Reward for Involvement -
Notice the latter part of verse 8. There will
be a reward according to this labor.
Look down to vs 13. Do you realize there
will be a judgment of your labors by the
Lord. The judgment Seat of Christ. Not
a Judgment concerning Salvation but a
Judgment concerning Service. Remember in
Matthew 25 the parable of the talents vs 19 ①
Don't you realize there is coming a Seat
of judgment that will review the service
that you have rendered to God? This is a drum ②

III. Reply on a Divine Increase of Our Labor
But God gave the increase. Be assured
of one thing. What small measure
of increase we have seen here in this place
is not 110. to the credit of the

workmanship of the laborers nor our expertise.

A. A Singular Increase of Our Labor - Look at $(V_5 \geq a-b) \pm V_6 8$. No matter how diverse our labors are, they are singular when it comes to the increase. The author wrote there is diversity but no division. For there to be Divine increase there is to be unity in focus in our labors. There is no one individual to be credited over another. Plus no one individual person can do it all. All of us in variety of tasks God uses singularly for his ultimate glory. Warren W said "Even though there is diversity of ministry there is unity".

B. A Sovereign Increase of Our Labor -

But God gave the increase. The farmer and all the field hands in the world can sweat and labor and plow and fertilize and water a seed all the long day, but God is the only one that can open that seed and produce fruit. Ultimately at the end of our exhaustive labors we lower our hands, look up to heaven and depend upon him for a harvest. Apart from divine intervention our labors are complete failures. God gives the increase.

IV Closing - Every saved Christian should be a serving Christian. We ought to be laboring tirelessly in His fields. But ultimately the fruits of our labors come from God alone.

- 1) ...there is unity of purpose; and there ought to be unity of spirit.